



Passing on the Faith

St. John's Lutheran Church and School

www.stjohnsarnold.org

Dear Families,

Part of your job as a parent is teaching your child about kindness and sharing. But we also want them to become considerate, empathetic, generous children who grow up caring about others.

Beside the fact that the Bible tells us to be compassionate and generous to those in poverty, there's also scientific research that shows how generosity releases happiness endorphins to our brain, reduces stress, and extends our life.

When you start to research how to do this, three themes emerge:

Do it yourself – Children will watch and copy what you do.

Talk about it – Point out when others are generous, and explain how God is generous with us, and therefore, we should be generous with others.

Encourage it – Look for opportunities to help your children practice being generous and doing things for others.

Questions to ask your Child:

When someone shares something that they love with you, how does it make you feel?

Did you ever share something that you really love? Did that person say thank you?

What can you give to others who may not have enough?

Upcoming Topics:

March: Lent

April: Beauty

May: Determination

Sharing your Faith:

Offer to share part of your snack or lunch with your child. The more they hear the word “share” the more they will be comfortable with the idea.

When you get something for your child that they ask for, ask them what they think someone else in the family would like, too. Let your child help you pick out and surprise that family member with a treat.

Use the term “be my helper” instead of “come help me” so that your child will see that helping can be part of who they are and not just what they do.

Catch them in the act! Praise your child when you see them sharing or being generous. Your child will get a great sense of pride from those words.

Try not to get involved in every battle over toys. Kids eventually learn to compromise when they realize that selfish behaviors drive friends away.

You are your child's best and first teacher:

While most children may not be flush with cash or have lots of expensive possessions, there are still many ways that kids can be generous. So it's important to discuss generosity with your children, including sharing your ideas, while also asking your kids about how they would like to give to others. Here are some examples of ways your children can be generous that don't involve money:

Give time. Time is our dearest resource. Children can use their time to help others in small ways, from walking the neighbor's dog to taking out the trash. Even spending a little time with a grandparent or finding a moment to read a book to a younger sibling shows generosity, and that usually makes everyone involved feel great.

Give of talents. Are your kids great at fixing broken things, baking, playing a musical instrument or keeping little kids entertained? Talents are blessings that can be bestowed upon others. It may seem like a small thing, but even my 6-year-old, whose explorative brain makes him the family-described "king of finding lost things," is routinely generous with his talent anytime someone in the house can't find a missing item. He invariably seems to find it, which is great for us; and he also feels successful, useful and happy because he can be of service to his family.

Share treasures. It's helpful to give money to charity, and we certainly need to teach our children to give a fraction of their allowance or savings to a cause that is meaningful to them. But there are other treasures that children can share. Can your daughter give her key chain to her brother who's been admiring it for days? Can your son give his old backpack to a friend in a rough spot? Many of us have extra clothing or household items that we're not using, and it's good to teach kids how they can help take inventory and determine what could be given away. Whether pots and pans, sweaters and socks, blankets or books, these items can help others immensely.

Team up. Encourage children to enlist the help of friends and family so that everyone can work as a team to help others. For example, get a group together to do a benefit walk or bake for a family going through a rough patch. In December, our whole family, along with some friends, adopted a family for the holidays and bought items off their wish list. The kids were able to go to the store and help purchase some of the items for the children who were in need. We couldn't have made such an impact without the help of everyone involved.

Come together. Bryan Stevenson, founder of the Equal Justice Initiative, urges people to "get proximate" to those who are in need. Whether your child wants to help a friend who has a disability or support people who are homeless, we need to spend time with those in need so that our eyes and heart will be opened.

Give thanks. Finally, we must model being grateful for our children. There is no way to be too generous with gratitude. It takes little time and effort, doesn't cost anything and in the face of concerns that children (not to mention adults) are becoming more entitled today, it's imperative we help kids see the ways that they can be generous and provide them with opportunities to be more giving out of habit. In addition, when we give generously – and teach our children to do the same – it can spark others to be more giving as well. That's just one more way everyone stands to benefit from being generous.



Bible Stories:

The Widow's Offering

Mark 12:41-44

Joseph and His Brothers

Genesis 45

Elisha and the Widow's Oil

2 Kings 4:1-7



Hebrews 13:16

**And do not forget to do well
and to share with others, for
with such sacrifices God is
pleased.**